

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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PARADE MAGAZINE, THE WASHINGTON POST, JAN 5, 1975: "SHAME OF THE NATION--THE HOUSING PICTURE IN AMERICA IS BLEAK, THE BLEAKEST IT HAS BEEN IN YEARS. EVERY GOVT STATISTIC INDICATES GLOOM: HOUSING-STARTS DOWN ANYWHERE FROM 40 TO 55PERCENT; 60PERCENT OF THE PEOPLE UNABLE TO AFFORD A HOME; 90PERCENT OF CURRENT CONSTRUCTION DESIGNED FOR PEOPLE IN THE TOP 36PERCENT OF INCOME LEVELS.

"WORST OF ALL IS THE HOUSING PICTURE IN RURAL AREAS, A SUBJECT SELDOM DISCUSSED. THE SAD TRUTH IS THAT 11 1/2 MILLION RURAL AMERICANS LIVE IN SUBSTANDARD HOUSING.

"ONE FAMILY IN FOUR IN APPALACHIA MUST WALK THROUGH THE COLD TO AN OUTDOOR PRIVY. ALMOST 45PERCENT OF THE NATION'S POOR FAMILIES RESIDE IN RURAL AREAS. MOST SEVERELY AFFECTED BY SUBSTANDARD RURAL HOUSING ARE BLACKS I THE DEEP SOUTH, INDIANS, MIGRANT FARMERS, SENIOR CITIZENS, AND OF COURSE, THE APPALACHIAN POOR.

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"MOST PEOPLE THINK THE WORST HOUSING IN AMERICA IS LOCATED IN CITY GHETTOS. NOT TRUE. THE INCIDENCE OF INADEQUATE HOUSING OUTSIDE METROPOLITAN AREAS IS ROUGHLY 3.5 TIMES WHAT IT IS WITHIN THE CITIES.

"THE STATISTICS OF SUBSTANDARD HOUSING IN RURAL AMERICA ARE SO STAGGERING THEY DEFY THE MIND'S LIMITS TO PICTURE THEM. GORDON CAVANAUGH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE HOUSING ASSISTANCE COUNCIL, RECENTLY TESTIFIED BEFORE THE US SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS, "THE APPROXIMATELY 11 1/2 MILLION RURAL CITIZENS LIVING IN SUBSTANDARD HOUSING IN THIS COUNTRY IS EQUIVALENT TO THE TOTAL POPULATION OF THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA... I SPENT SIX YEARS DIRECTING THE HOUSING AND CODE PROGRAMS OF ONE OF THE

COUNTRY'S LARGEST CITIES AND, ALONG WITH MANY, I WOULD NOT HAVE BELIEVED THAT THE DREADFUL CONDITIONS IN MANY URBAN AREAS DID NOT REPRESENT THE BULK OF OUR NATION'S SHELTER PROBLEMS.

"I WAS WRONG. THERE IS AN AMERICAN SUBCONTINENT OF SUBSTANDARD HOUSING, AND IT IS RURAL AMERICA." KISSINGER

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